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VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

(Note: The initial reference is to the two RB-47 officers whose release was announced at the opening of the press conference.)

Question: Mr. President, did the Russians ask any quid pro quo or did we make any concessions to them in exchange for the release of these fliers?

Answer: We did not.

Question: If they (sic) did not, how do you account for this remarkable turnabout in their relations with us?

Answer: We did not. The statement which I have made is a statement which the United States Government put forward on this matter, which I read to you earlier in regard to overflights. I would not attempt to make judgment as to why the Soviet Union chose to release them at this time.

I did say in my statement to Mr. Arrowsmith that this had removed a serious obstacle in the way of peaceful relations between the Soviet Union and the United States and I would judge that they desired to remove that serious obstacle.

Question: Does that mean, Sir, that they accepted a reassurance of no-more-overflights as an exchange?

Answer: It is a fact that I have ordered that the flights not be resumed, which is a continuation of the order given by President Eisenhower in May of last year.

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The transcript also records, at another point in the conference, the following question and answer:

Question: This RB-47 was claimed by the Russians as an overflight, although we took a different position. In the light of the announcement, what will be your general policy on overflights and on such things as the U-2 flights? Do you conceive of circumstances which might warrant resumption of such things as the U-2 flights?

Answer: The Soviet Government is fully aware of the United States Government's views with respect to the distinction between the question of the United States Air Force RB-47 and the incident which occurred over Soviet territory on May 1, 1960 involving an American U-2 type aircraft. Flights of American aircraft penetrating the airspace of the Soviet Union have been suspended since May, 1960. I have ordered that they not be resumed.

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